

*"I recommend that other companies give ExporTech consideration. I'm glad they recruited me. Most people want to know everything before they do anything. In the world of exporting, this is not possible. But the ExporTech program can give you the resources to be a problem solver. I believe that there's always a way, once you know there's a way." George Chambers, President*

### WE'RE IN HOT WATER!

**ABOUT.** Solar Unlimited North America designs and installs solar hot water systems for domestic hot water and space heating. Based in Lewes, Delaware, the full-service shop offers turnkey solutions that make it easy for customers to go solar. The company's five-person team, led by president George Chambers, handles all aspects of commercial solar system implementation—from design, engineering, and permits, to grant applications, installation, and training. Solar Unlimited's goal is to help commercial property owners and nonprofits take control of their energy future while creating a greener planet.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Like many small businesses, Solar Unlimited was struggling in a downturned economy. When Chambers received a call from Global Delaware to pitch a trade mission to Mexico, he decided he had nothing to lose and much to gain by exploring the option. Global Delaware connected Solar Unlimited to the Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership (DEMEP), a NIST MEP affiliate at Delaware Technical Community College. Chambers decided to enroll in DEMEP's ExporTech training program to get the help he needed to expand his business in a foreign market.

**MEP'S ROLE.** Chambers said he likes to set goals, and his goal was to sell to 12 new hospitals in Mexico in 2016. He identified two key obstacles: the language barrier, specifically for translating technical terms into Spanish; and establishing a local partner in Mexico, along with import support. The ExporTech classes gave Chambers the resources and knowledge he needed to overcome these obstacles and succeed in expanding his business to Mexico. Chambers noted that he was the first in the marketplace, which gives him an advantage, but he also has to face the challenge of convincing business owners to trust in his product and process. He said one of the biggest objections, both in the US and Mexico, is his solar hot water seeming "too good to be true" because of the amount of energy it can save organizations—as much as 80 percent. The ExporTech training introduced Chambers to the Export-Import Bank, which offered loans that were guaranteed at 85 percent of the project. These loans remove the money objection for the customer and lower the cost of borrowing for the hospital. Chambers is currently involved in two pilot projects with the largest hospital system in Mexico. If all goes well with his two pilot projects, he will have the opportunity to sell to the 22 other hospitals in the group.



### RESULTS



**\$755,000** in pilot projects



**\$4,000,000** available after successful pilot projects



Obtained loans guaranteeing **85%** of the project



Up to **80%** energy reduction per project

### NEXT STEPS



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